

THE HARIDAS A MOVEMENT

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God was a personal being, faultless, full of good qualities, merciful and watchful of the welfare of all creation; and that He would save all who acknowledged Him in their life. Naturally the creed discounted ritual and ceremonial. It discountenanced the worship of man[^] Gods and the sacrifice of life in worship of the godhead. It disapproved of astrology and horoscopy, and emphasised reliance on God's mercy. It distinguished between community by birth and community by quality, declaring that a man's inner being was of more consequence than the social circumstances of his birth or growth. The Haridasa movement was thus really a reform movement and its programme was the same in essentials as the programme of the Virasaiva movement. Only it did not specifically break away from existing institutions but tried rather to modify them in the direction in which salvation appeared to lie. Hundreds of preachers of the movement went about the country with the message of liberation, singing psalms of wisdom and religious experience and preaching God from door to door.

The first of the Haridasa is said to have been one Narahari Tirtha. He was perhaps the first to express in a song in the vernacular his feelings in relation to God and life. The next important name in the tradi-

tion is that of Vyasara. Next after his is that of Purandarada. Purandara is easily the greatest of the Haridasas. He is so great that to most people his predecessors are not even names; and all other Dasas except one—Kanakadasa—are merely disciples. Purandaradasa seems at first to have been wealthy and to have lived a life of luxury and ease, unwilling to